



# Technical Assistance Services *for Communities* Midnite Mine Technical Assistance Needs Assessment

**Contract No.:** EP-W-13-015

**Task Order No.:** 68HE0518F0209: OSRTI – Multi Regions & Headquarters Support

**Technical Directive No.:** R10 3.1.3 Midnite Mine

## **Technical Assistance Needs Assessment Report**

**Site Name:** Midnite Mine Superfund Site  
**Site Location:** Wellpinit, Washington  
**Date:** November 15, 2021

### **Introduction**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) program conducted this Technical Assistance Needs Assessment (TANA) for the community near the Midnite Mine Superfund site. Its purpose is to better understand the current technical assistance needs of the tribal members and the local community related to the cleanup of the Midnite Mine Superfund site.

The recommendations in this TANA report are based on:

- Background site and community information gathered online.<sup>1</sup>
- EPA's 2019 Midnite Mine Community Survey.
- Telephone conversations with tribal members, community members and stakeholders. TANA participants are listed in the table on the following page.
- Comments gathered during the community comment period.

This TANA was conducted because EPA received multiple requests for enhanced community involvement regarding the site. This report is funded by EPA's TASC program. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the policies, actions or positions of EPA. This report was finalized after input from TANA participants and a general community review from October 26, 2021 through November 9, 2021. The final version incorporates all comments received.

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<sup>1</sup> The end of this document provides a list of information sources.

<b>Entity/Organization</b>	<b>Participants<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Format</b>
Spokane Tribe of Indians – Tribal Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melodi Wynne</li> <li>• Monica Tonasket</li> <li>• Jessiray Wheeler</li> <li>• Justin Moyer</li> <li>• Janice K. Moyer</li> </ul>	Conversations in 2020 and April through July 2021	Phone
Spokane Tribe of Indians – Tribal Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BJ Kieffer, Director, Natural Resources Department</li> <li>• Ricky Sherwood, Midnite Mine Community Liaison</li> <li>• Brian Crossley, Water &amp; Fish Program Manager</li> </ul>	Conversations in May and June 2021	Phone
Moyer Construction, Inc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeff Moyer</li> <li>• Justin Moyer</li> <li>• Janice K. Moyer</li> </ul>	April 27, 2021	Phone
Citizens for a Clean Columbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joe Wichmann, Technical Advisor</li> </ul>	August 3, 2021	Phone
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhonda Kaetzel, Regional Director</li> </ul>	June 6, 2021	Phone
Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ryan Sealy, Environmental Health Scientist</li> </ul>	June 17, 2021	Phone
EPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lucas DuSablón, Tribal Coordinator</li> <li>• Linda Meyer, Regional Project Manager</li> <li>• Julie Congdon, Community Involvement Coordinator</li> <li>• Julie Wroble, Section Manager</li> </ul>	June 23, 2021, and July 29, 2021	Phone
Washington State University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Luis Manriquez, Community Health Equity Director, Office of Land Grant Mission and Leadership</li> </ul>	July 14, 2021	Phone
Washington State Department of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kristen Schwab, Health Physicist</li> </ul>	July 19, 2021	Phone
Newmont Mining Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• William Lyle, Alternate Project Coordinator</li> </ul>	July 19, 2021	Phone
Worthington Miller Environmental, LLC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sherman Worthington, Supervising Contractor</li> </ul>	July 26, 2021	Phone

<sup>2</sup> This is not an inclusive list. Some participants requested that their names not be published. Some participants are listed in more than one category.

## **Background Information**

### *Site Background*

The Midnite Mine Superfund site is a 350-acre, inactive uranium mine located on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Stevens County about 8 miles northwest of Wellpinit, Washington. The Dawn Mining Company operated the mine from 1954 to 1981. The mined area contains more than 33 million tons of waste rock, unprocessed ore and low-grade ore (also known as protore). It also includes two large open pits partially filled with water and several pits backfilled with waste rock. Contaminants at the site include radionuclides and heavy metals. In addition to the mine, the site includes mine-affected areas of sediment, surface water, soil and groundwater. Mine-affected surface water and groundwater enter Blue Creek, which flows 3.5 miles to the Spokane River.

Midnite Mine is part of the uranium mining legacy resulting from the escalation of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. During the height of production, the mine employed nearly 500 people, including many tribal members. These jobs were a boon to the local economy, but the risks of mining radioactive material were not communicated to workers and safety precautions were not in place. Miners worked without adequate safety gear or protocols, workers brought radioactive dust home on their clothes, children played with rubber balls used to crush ore, ore was spilled from trucks along local roads and contaminated waste rock was used to construct local roads, driveways and fireplaces.

In 2000, due to elevated levels of metals and radionuclides at the site, EPA listed Midnite Mine on the Superfund National Priorities List of sites eligible for federal cleanup funds. In 2006, EPA selected a cleanup plan for the site with concurrence from the Spokane Tribe of Indians. In 2008, the two mining companies involved with the site (Newmont and Dawn) and the United States were found liable for the costs associated with the contamination at the site. Cleanup of the site began in 2016 and is expected to continue until 2028.

### *Community Context*

The Spokane Tribe of Indians is a sovereign government body led by the Spokane Tribal Business Council. The Council consists of the Tribal Chairwoman, Vice Chairman, Tribal Secretary and two Council members.

According to the Tribe's website, accessed in September 2021, tribal membership included approximately 2,900 people. According to the 2020 Census, about 2,541 people live on the Spokane reservation and off-reservation trust land; the population is about 85% American Indian. According to the Washington State Department of Health, American Indians across the state experience disproportionate health disparities. The group has the lowest life expectancy at birth and experiences the highest rates of infant mortality, certain cancers, asthma and suicide compared to other groups in Washington.

The members and residents on the reservation of the Spokane Tribe of Indians are also disproportionately affected by the mine and its cleanup. Many Spokane Tribe members report having worked, or lived with family members who worked, at the mine or at its mill in nearby Ford, Washington, before they closed. This area's high percentage of indigenous residents experience lower

incomes, higher unemployment and higher levels of pollution (such as ozone, radon and particulate matter) when compared to other residents in the state of Washington. This puts the community at a higher risk for environmental justice concerns according to EPA's EJSCREEN tool.

### *Previous Community Involvement and Technical Assistance Efforts*

There have been technical assistance efforts at the site. In 2004 and 2005, EPA requested assistance from Technical Outreach Services for Native American Communities (TOSNAC) and Technical Outreach Services for Communities (TOSC). TOSNAC/TOSC provided technical reviews of documents, in-person trainings, meeting facilitation and site visits. In 2012 and 2014, TASC provided services at the site including an informal TANA, meeting facilitation, document review, community education materials and access to an independent technical advisor. The community, tribal members and organized groups such as SHAWL (Sovereignty, Health, Air, Water, Land) Society, the Spokane Tribal Network and Spokane Riverkeeper have also had interest and involvement in the cleanup. These groups are discussed further in the next section.

### **Potential Technical Assistance Recipient Groups**

SHAWL Society is a grassroots advocacy group based on the Spokane Indian Reservation.<sup>3</sup> Members of SHAWL focus on community education and strategies to address the impacts of exposure to uranium mining and milling on the reservation. SHAWL has invited EPA to present information about mine cleanup work in Spokane as well as on the Spokane Indian Reservation. SHAWL was founded and led by Deb Abrahamson but the future of the group is unclear.

The Spokane Tribal Network (STN) is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit located in Wellpinit, Washington, on the Spokane Indian Reservation that serves a valuable role for the Spokane tribal community.<sup>4</sup> STN provides system resource collaboration and generates hope for the Spokane tribal community by fostering intergenerational wellness and resilience. The group has an established board of directors, three employees and four committees including an executive committee, finance committee, youth and wellness committee and economic development committee. This organized group is conducting food sovereignty efforts that have been impacted by mining activities at the site. The group consists of Spokane tribal members.

Founded in 1982, the Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) organization takes a proactive, collaborative and science-based approach to promoting fish, water, wildlife, diverse habitat and Indian culture in the Northwest.<sup>5</sup> UCUT provides a common voice in the region through the collaboration of five area tribes: the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho and the Spokane Tribe of Indians. The UCUT organization includes five staff members, commission members representing the five tribes and senior managers. This organized group does not have documented involvement with Midnite Mine community outreach efforts. The group represents the interests of Spokane Tribe members.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://shawlsociety.blogspot.com/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.spokanetribalnetwork.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://ucut.org/>

Spokane Riverkeeper is a grassroots advocacy group formed by lawyers in 2009.<sup>6</sup> The goal of the group is to advocate for the Spokane River and its watershed. The group has an established board of directors, program director and fleet of boats. While the group is concerned about impacts to the Spokane River from Superfund site discharge and a member of the group participated in an interview for the site's 2019 Five-Year Review, the group does not appear to consist of Spokane Tribe members.

Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility is a 40-year-old, health professional-led advocacy organization working to create a healthy, just, peaceful and sustainable world.<sup>7</sup> The group has a board and five staff members and lists building solidarity with nuclear frontline communities as a goal in their 2021 strategic plan. The group's website mentions contamination at the Midnite Mine site and concern for people accessing water from the Spokane River and concern for the Spokane Tribe. This organized group does not have documented involvement with Midnite Mine community outreach efforts. The group does not appear to consist of Spokane Tribe members.

Other related organizations are the Northwest Toxic Communities Coalition<sup>8</sup> and the University of Washington Superfund Research Program.<sup>9</sup> Both of these groups appear to work with communities impacted by Superfund sites.

### **Community Perspectives on Barriers to Involvement**

Several key factors currently impact meaningful community participation in the discussion and decision-making process for the Superfund site.

#### *History of Mistreatment by and Mistrust of the United States Government and Concerns of Racial Bias*

Prior to colonization, the Spokane Tribe used to hunt, fish and live off more than 3 million acres of territory across northeastern Washington. As settlers pushed Native Americans off their lands, interactions with the United States Government were filled with the trauma of war, violence, treaties, forced assimilation and sickness. In 1881, eight years before Washington became a state, President Rutherford B. Hayes signed an executive order establishing the Spokane Tribe's reservation on a fraction of their historic land. By 1887, all three bands of the tribe were relocated there. In 1906, the tribe, once 3,000 members strong, had diminished to about 600 people. Additionally, construction of dams on the Spokane and Columbia Rivers stopped salmon runs that had sustained the nation for generations. Historical trauma and tribal members' general mistrust of the United States government and its agencies such as EPA continue to this day.

Several tribal members noted that this painful history impacts current community involvement efforts and goodwill between tribal members and EPA staff. Some TANA participants also noted that prejudicial employment practices and racial bias, particularly from local management at the mine, have negatively impacted tribal members employed at the mine. Owners of one tribally-owned company report being negatively impacted by the bid process of cleanup work and believe they lost millions of dollars. Other tribal members mentioned that at times they felt former EPA staff underestimated tribal members or talked down to them. A few respondents indicated that it can feel like a waste of time to

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.spokaneriverkeeper.org/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.wpsr.org/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://nwtoxiccommunities.org/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://deohs.washington.edu/srp/>

engage with EPA, that they do not see action and a response to their concerns and that over time this can be draining and reduce enthusiasm to participate in meetings or discussions with EPA regarding the Superfund site. One participant noted that there is a sense that EPA comes in with the answers but does not take a step back to see if there could be another way. They see it as a continuation of assimilation, colonialism and oppression that can perpetuate a deeply strained relationship even though everyone has the same goal: the cleanup of Midnite Mine.

#### *United States and Spokane Tribe of Indians Working Relationship*

EPA consults on a government-to-government basis with federally recognized tribal governments when EPA actions and decisions may affect tribal interests. Because EPA is working directly with the Spokane Tribal Council, some tribal members feel that both governments are “two parents talking” in a paternalistic relationship and that tribal members do not have the opportunity to fully engage in the Superfund process. Participants note that tribal leadership and tribal government are not the same thing, and that if EPA engages only with the tribal government, then the community can feel shut out. These same respondents note that there is concern about EPA and tribal oversight of the mining company during the cleanup and question the transparency and integrity of the process. Some participants feel that there is poor participation at public meetings because many have felt that public comment periods are already a “done deal,” and that decisions have been made and their input does not matter. They feel shut out.

#### *Small Population Size and Differing Opinions Among Community Members*

Members of the tribe and local community have varying views about the cleanup at the Midnite Mine Superfund site; however, all participants noted that it is important to protect people, animals and the environment from further contamination from uranium mining at the site. The relatively small population of the tribe and differing opinions about necessary community involvement can make it challenging to assess community technical assistance needs and involve community members. Some participants noted that the most active and vocal community group did not represent the entire tribal community and that this engagement caused communications to become more hostile or shut down community members who did not agree. Other participants noted that some community members may be growing apathetic because the cleanup has been going on for so long, or that community members might not want to accept that something that brings economic benefit can also bring harm. One participant mentioned that the majority of tribal members agree with the cleanup and how it is being conducted.

#### *Capacity of an Overburdened Community*

Many tribal members are burdened by additional environmental justice issues, health disparities, unemployment and low income levels. These factors may lower the capacity of community members to meaningfully engage in the Superfund process because they are dealing with other critical needs. One participant noted that there is distrust because the health and safety of people has never been adequately addressed. They noted that there is a big gap between the health of people living on the Spokane Indian Reservation and neighboring communities and no agency has come forward to address this.

## *Capacity of EPA Staff*

Community members noted that EPA site staff have turned over several times in recent years. One respondent shared that it can be time consuming to relay site history and context to new staff members and that community involvement can suffer when staff are less knowledgeable about the site and that this can place an additional burden on community members. Several participants noted a high level of confidence in the current Remedial Project Manager and hoped that she would not leave. Many participants noted that community involvement activities such as regular updates, meetings and technical assistance activities have not been consistently provided by EPA or other health agencies such as the state Department of Health or ATSDR in recent years.

## **Perspectives on Community Technical Assistance Needs from Stakeholder Conversations**

TASC conducted TANA conversations from April to August 2021.<sup>10</sup> Participants shared a variety of concerns related to the community's potential technical assistance needs. Concerns expressed by participants fall into the following categories:

1. Outreach methods could be better tailored to meet community needs.
2. The community's history of distrust and previous experiences affect how people may receive information.
3. Community members remain concerned about contamination from the site and health in general.

Participants shared different concerns and offered some potential solutions. These findings are summarized in the table below.

<b>Stakeholder Concerns</b>	<b>Potential Solutions Suggested By Stakeholders</b>
1. Outreach methods could be better tailored to meet community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Present information in a way that works for the community. When possible, include images, visuals and graphics.</li><li>• Use plain language.<sup>11</sup></li><li>• Consider working with local artists to convey information.</li><li>• Conduct one-on-one, on-the-ground, in-person outreach when possible; consider attending local events or going door to door.</li><li>• Partner with and use existing community resources (ideally tribal) for outreach.</li><li>• Use more online outreach, such as social media and Facebook, while understanding that not everyone has computer and Internet access.</li><li>• Consider creating a Facebook group dedicated to engaging the community.</li></ul>

<sup>10</sup> These community members and stakeholders were recommended by EPA or other participants.

<sup>11</sup> Participants identified different ways of interpreting the term "plain language." To the participants, plain language could include using non-technical language, providing more background and context, limiting the amount of information included and providing accompanying visuals with written explanations.

Stakeholder Concerns	Potential Solutions Suggested By Stakeholders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider outreach through publications such as the <i>Rawhide</i> and the <i>Spokesman-Review</i>.</li> <li>• Consider posting flyers in common community locations such as the Trading Post, the Tribal Administration Building (near where people pay their utility bills) or at the Post Office.</li> <li>• Place an exhibit in tribal headquarters and update it quarterly.</li> <li>• When possible, let the tribe share information through the council, Department of Natural Resources staff or the Community Liaison.</li> <li>• Consider presenting information at local schools.</li> <li>• Provide information for newer residents who may not know the history of the site.</li> <li>• Distribute information through mass mailings.</li> <li>• Host a pre- and post-construction season open house every year. Provide transportation to those who need it.</li> <li>• Engage Stevens County non-tribal residents living off the reservation but adjacent to it who may be impacted by high background levels of radiation.</li> <li>• Engage schools and science classes.</li> <li>• Reach out to elders.</li> <li>• Small presentations by the Superfund Coordinator could be helpful.</li> <li>• If community members reach out by U.S. Postal mail or another method, EPA should try to respond to them using the same communication method.</li> </ul>
<p>2. The community's history of distrust and previous experiences affect how people may receive information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge the tribe's history and the significance of what has taken place. Listen to the stories of people who have been affected. EPA could consider issuing a statement to acknowledge what they have heard.</li> <li>• Listen to and incorporate tribal wisdom when it comes to making decisions that affect the people and the land.</li> <li>• Training for EPA staff to improve community interactions.</li> <li>• Partner with or have trusted entities provide information to the community. Some participants noted that it would be good if information could be conveyed to the community through the Spokane Tribe of Indians by Tribal Council, Department of Natural Resources staff or the Community Liaison. Other participants thought it would be even better if information could be shared by local community groups such as SHAWL or UCUT.</li> <li>• Partner with community groups like STN or UCUT and use existing tribal resources for outreach.</li> <li>• Be more proactive and consistent in providing information to the community. For example, provide regular updates about how the cleanup is progressing. Create a schedule for updating the community and stick to it. Provide information on a regular basis rather than upon request. The community might not have a large bandwidth for</li> </ul>



Stakeholder Concerns	Potential Solutions Suggested By Stakeholders
	<p>requesting information, but still appreciates regular community involvement. Regular updates on a quarterly or bi-annual basis would be appreciated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on transparency and openness regarding background radiation levels. For example, be clear that although cleanup will address uranium contamination resulting from mining activities, there are naturally occurring levels of radiation resulting from the geography of the site that will exist after the cleanup is complete. Be clear about cleanup criteria and to what level the site will be cleaned up.</li> <li>• Focus on transparency and openness regarding decisions, roles and communications. For example, be clear about conversations and actions that take place between EPA staff, Tribal Council and mining company representatives.</li> <li>• Provide more information about how EPA conducts appropriate oversight of the mining company as it conducts cleanup. There is a high level of distrust among community members about the integrity and motivations of the mining company. Many community members feel the mining company cares about cutting costs and corners and is motivated by capitalism rather than the best interests of community members.</li> <li>• Re-examine the consent decree and associated parties. Some TANA participants have concerns about the consent decree not being properly enforced, whether proper oversight has been performed by EPA, and whether a non-disclosure agreement has affected site activities that have led to further community distrust.</li> <li>• Community meetings should ideally be introduced and led by the tribe, but EPA should attend and ensure that there is involvement by other agencies such as the state Department of Health, Indian Health Service, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board or ATSDR when health concerns arise.</li> <li>• When possible, keep EPA staff members consistent.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Community members remain concerned about contamination from the site and health in general.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge the tribe's history and continued experience of loss and disease and the belief among many that the mine has contributed to this suffering. Listen to the stories of people who have been affected.</li> <li>• Provide more information about current worker safety practices at the site.</li> <li>• Consider an anonymous tip line for worker safety concerns and employment practices because employees are not allowed to speak up about quality control dust observations or whether workers are scanning out hot, for example. Compile and share a list of concerns and follow ups.</li> <li>• Consider having cameras at the site and a feed that the public could view.</li> </ul>

Stakeholder Concerns	Potential Solutions Suggested By Stakeholders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more information and transparency about procedures that emergency medical personnel need to follow when responding to an incident at the site. Mock drills could be helpful.</li> <li>• Provide information that would address community concerns that contamination exists outside the site fence line and has not been adequately addressed.</li> <li>• Provide information about how hunters and anglers can stay safe.</li> <li>• Provide up to date information about health risks related to accessing water from Blue Creek – what EPA is doing to mitigate those risks and what the public needs to do to stay healthy.</li> <li>• Provide information about the entity or agency with jurisdiction over public health. Explain what is known about life expectancy, cancer rates and overall health of the community. Address environmental justice concerns for this vulnerable and overburdened community.</li> <li>• Listen to tribal wisdom about how to improve the health of the community and encourage collaboration of efforts when possible, including support for a tribal-led cancer treatment facility option.</li> <li>• Provide assurance that contaminated mine-related waste was not located off-site and if it was, supply information to reassure the public that contamination does not remain.</li> <li>• Provide testing services for the future community garden area that was known to have contaminated mining waste located on it. Or, if EPA cannot provide the testing, help identify an agency that can provide testing.</li> <li>• Provide information about whether contamination remains along the road between the mill and the mine site. How does EPA know all contamination has been removed? Many people are concerned that it remains along roads, in driveways, in fireplaces and in other areas where waste rock was used. Are there radiation survey tools that can be used to assess whether contaminated material remains?</li> </ul>

### *Specific Technical Assistance and Other Needs*

While this TANA focuses on technical assistance needs, all needs expressed by participants are documented. The following table summarizes specific technical assistance needs as well as other needs shared by participants.

Technical Assistance Need Type	Specific Needs Mentioned By Stakeholders
Informational Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about how metals and radionuclides have migrated from on-site source areas into local groundwater and surface water as a result of acid mine drainage.</li> <li>• Information about the extent of dissolved contaminant transport outside of the site area via local groundwater and surface water.</li> </ul>

Technical Assistance Need Type	Specific Needs Mentioned By Stakeholders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the extent of soil and mining waste contamination through material transported off site to build roads, driveways and other features.</li> <li>• Information about whether it is safe to live, conduct traditional activities or garden near the site.</li> <li>• Information about the difference between background levels and cleanup levels.</li> <li>• Information about future road closures, truck traffic, a truck numbering system or other impacts to the community as a result of the cleanup.</li> <li>• Information about the upcoming pipeline from the mine site to Lake Roosevelt including information about what it will look like.</li> <li>• Information about institutional controls and future O&amp;M activities once the site is cleaned up.</li> <li>• Information about the water treatment plant. What is the water treatment method? Is there a backup in event of a major weather event or a failure? Is there redundancy in the system? How will the plant operate into the future? Who will maintain it and what will that require?</li> <li>• Information about where we are in the Superfund cleanup process, what the future schedule will look like and what activities will take place from year to year.</li> <li>• Information about what will happen after the cleanup is complete.</li> <li>• Information for the tribe about how to maintain the site and the water treatment plant once the site is no longer on the Superfund National Priorities List.</li> <li>• In-person access to the site, as practical and keeping with safety procedures.</li> <li>• Regular drone footage or live video feed of the site.</li> <li>• Potential health consequences of contamination.</li> <li>• Current exposure risks.</li> <li>• Information about Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) studies or other health studies.</li> <li>• A frequently asked questions (FAQ) sheet about the site.</li> <li>• Information about cleanup technologies and how the approach to cleanup at the site compares to the newest technologies available.</li> <li>• General information from EPA that the tribe can distribute.</li> </ul>
Procedural/Structural Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A schedule for regular community involvement.</li> <li>• Tools that would help the tribe take more of a leadership role in community involvement.</li> <li>• Build trust with the community and acknowledge that relationships have been tense and community involvement efforts have been lacking at times. The community cannot receive information from an agency it does not trust.</li> </ul>

Technical Assistance Need Type	Specific Needs Mentioned By Stakeholders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EPA could hold a listening session with tribal elders to develop more of an understanding of the tribal perspective.</li> <li>• Transparency in the process of communication/decision-making/oversight among EPA, the tribe, the mining company and with the community.</li> <li>• Information about how parties have interacted in the past, how things have changed and how work gets done.</li> <li>• Transparency about financial information – who is paying for the cleanup, who is calling the shots, who has the power and what are the motivations?</li> <li>• Information about how EPA and the tribe are properly overseeing the cleanup. Some participants feel the mining company can do whatever it wants.</li> <li>• Facilitation and mediation support to help different groups engage in meaningful discussion together.</li> <li>• Clarify the rules of engagement between EPA, the community and the Tribal Council.</li> <li>• Allow the tribe to have more control of the cleanup process.</li> <li>• An active information repository.</li> <li>• Information about grants or opportunities for community groups or non-profits.</li> <li>• Greater oversight about hiring practices and contract awards to make sure that native employees or native-run business are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>• Provide more information on how bids are awarded.</li> <li>• Provide federal pay to workers rather than private company wages.</li> <li>• Newmont should hire some tribal members for leadership positions.</li> </ul>
Requested of Tribal Members to Tribe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the process of tribal oversight including information about the attorneys, consultants and staff who oversee the cleanup on behalf of the tribe.</li> <li>• More information about the role of the Midnite Mine Community Liaison.</li> <li>• Regular communication about the cleanup from Tribal Council and tribal staff.</li> <li>• Provide information on whether there is a non-disclosure agreement between the Tribal Council and the mining company. Why can't the tribe talk about and be transparent about what is going on?</li> <li>• Tribal Council seems too busy to talk to tribal members.</li> </ul>
Other Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow the community to share concerns beyond the confines of the Superfund process to help acknowledge and validate these concerns. When possible, help community members with information about where to seek assistance, if known.</li> <li>• Clarify misinformation and confusion surrounding cleanup levels and related topics in order to be able to move forward with explaining current Superfund activities.</li> <li>• One participant expressed concern that the cleanup criteria listed in the site's remedial investigation and feasibility study could not be met.</li> </ul>

Technical Assistance Need Type	Specific Needs Mentioned By Stakeholders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about what other tribes are doing to successfully clean up their uranium mines and mitigate health impacts, including building connections between tribes.</li> </ul>
Needs of the Cleanup Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct regular meetings among EPA, the tribe and the mining company (3-4 meetings a year are recommended).</li> <li>• In addition to administrative meetings, hold regular informal, technical meetings such as a lunch among tribal staff, mining company representatives and agency staff.</li> <li>• Continue regular monthly calls between the Newmont Executive Team and the Tribal Council that started during the pandemic.</li> </ul>
Other Tribal Needs Related to Human Health and the Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on how to prepare for and mitigate the impact of wildfires.</li> <li>• Improve the Indian Health System or let it be run by the tribe.</li> <li>• Access to closer tribal-run treatment options for tribal members with cancer.</li> <li>• Forward-thinking solutions regarding overall health and wellness, rooted in the understanding that the health of the people depends on the health of the land.</li> <li>• Food sovereignty efforts to promote healthy and culturally-appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods.</li> <li>• A broad environmental health education campaign.</li> <li>• Information about drinking water well sampling results.</li> </ul>

### Recommendations for Technical Assistance

This section describes preliminary recommendations to help meet community needs based on conversations with community members and stakeholders. These recommendations focus on technical assistance. They could be fulfilled by EPA and other involved entities such as the state Department of Health, ATSDR or other state and federal agencies, with support from the TASC program and other technical assistance programs where appropriate. Almost all participants noted that communication is most effective when it comes from the tribe rather than EPA and would recommend that technical assistance be delivered through the tribe, tribal members or local organizations.

TASC may attend a future public meeting to present this TANA report and potentially prioritize assistance requests. These recommendations would be updated based on the discussion with the community.

#### *Provide Regular Updates to the Community*

- Coordinate regularly-scheduled in-person public meetings with community members to facilitate interaction between community members and government agencies and improve information sharing (2-4 times per year)
  - EPA could support meeting logistics, with facilitation provided by an independent facilitator, tribal staff or community organization.

- Provide quarterly site updates about recent and upcoming cleanup and community involvement activities
  - Each update could include an updated cleanup timeline
  - Could help to advertise upcoming public meetings
  - Include a “topic of the quarter”
    - Consult with community members on which topics to feature
  - Distribute by mail, email, bulletin boards, online, Facebook
- Conduct pre- and post-construction season open house tours of the cleanup site with transportation provided
- Provide an exhibit or model for the tribal administration building, to be updated quarterly
- Share drone videos of site filmed periodically, with time stamp

#### *Provide Site Information in Plain Language*

- Provide a series of fact sheets about the following topics. If needed, the list of topics could be expanded as identified by community members. Fact sheets should be short, in plain language, and include visuals and maps. The fact sheets could be provided by EPA and/or health agencies.
  - Information about the cleanup
    - Who is paying for what? Information about the responsible parties.
    - How does communication and decision-making happen?
    - Who is providing oversight of the mining companies throughout cleanup? Information about EPA site team and tribal staff, their experience and technical support (attorneys, consultants, firms, etc.).
    - What will happen when the cleanup is complete?
  - How to stay safe at the site
    - Safe recreating/hunting/tribal practices near Blue Creek
    - Procedures for emergency medical personnel when responding to incidents at the site
    - Worker safety at the site
  - Health agencies and who is responsible for what (ATSDR, state Department of Health, Indian Health Service, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board)

#### *Provide Engaging Outreach to the Community*

- Create an online GIS StoryMap to visually present the site’s history, cleanup activities and future plans. The StoryMap could include photos, community quotes, a timeline, before and after slider maps, and links to existing videos.
- Consider creating an EPA Facebook presence for online communications, as the community prefers using Facebook over the EPA website
- Consider posting updates at local flyering spots or bulletin boards
- Update the site’s community involvement plan
- Create an environmental justice action plan if deemed appropriate.

### *Health Study*

- Request that an agency such as the Washington Department of Health or ATSDR conduct a health study for the tribe as a whole to address the health concerns of tribal members, including uranium, radon, cancer and environmental justice.
  - Based on the results of the health study, additional technical assistance needs may arise.

### *Additional Recommendations*

- Continue working with community groups and tribal partners to be more proactive with sharing information and building trust. This could include partnering with tribal members or agencies for outreach materials and events and keeping websites and repositories up to date. EPA could hold a listening session with tribal elders to develop more of an understanding of the tribal perspective.
- Provide train-the-trainer Superfund workshops for tribal council members or staff on the cleanup activities. This could include developing materials or tools to help tribal leaders continue to build capacity and disseminate information.
- Once the TANA is finalized and EPA and other agencies have a specific plan for which recommendations they will implement and an estimated timeline, share the plan for community engagement with the community and revisit annually.
- Update the TANA after a specified period to more formally consider additional community needs. Based on community interest and needs at that time, review concerns and update recommendations as needed.

### *Additional Consideration*

- When possible, consider referencing existing sources of information including current online news articles, videos of tribal members speaking in their own words and published information from community groups. Community members have expressed that they are tired of the community involvement process, and answering questions over and over can bring up memories of loss, death, frustration and disappointment. In the future, if EPA requires more information from tribal members, it might be beneficial to enlist the help of the Midnite Mine Community Liaison to conduct conversations in the most culturally appropriate manner.

### **Sources Consulted for Background Information on the Site and the Community**

- EPA Site Overview for Midnite Mine Superfund site. Available at: <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csitinfo.cfm?id=1001070>.
- TASC 2012 Technical Assistance Requests Summary. Available at: <https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/10/100193209.pdf>.
- ATSDR Public Health Assessment for Midnite Mine Site. Available at: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/pha/MidniteMineSiteFinal/MM-FinalReleasePHAFINAL05172010ATSDRwebsite.pdf>.
- Recent newspaper articles in the following publications:
  - The Spokesman Review: <https://www.spokesman.com/>
  - Outdoors Out There: <https://outthereoutdoors.com/the-slow-clean-up-of-midnite-mine/>
  - The Fig Tree: <https://www.thefigtree.org/index.htm>
  - The Planet Magazine: <https://theplanetmagazine.net/mining-for-answers-a38be6a02761>

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